IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 17, 25 to 28, 34 and 35 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, now read as follows:

1 to 16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently amended) A sticker printing apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, comprising:

selection means for selecting one of a plurality of background patterns displayed on the display screen by using said touch panel;

background image display means for displaying on the display screen a background image corresponding to the pattern selected by said selection means;

input means for inputting, by using said touch panel, a plurality of character strings to be printed on a sticker, each of said plurality of character strings being assigned to each of a plurality of logical layers which overlay each other in a fixed order ~~in association with a logical layer~~;

control means for generating bit image data corresponding to an inputted character string and storing the bit image data in a predetermined storage, each time a character string is inputted by said input means;

layout means for laying out each of the stored bit image data in accordance with said fixed order ~~for each layer~~;

generating means for generating image data by overlaying each of the image data obtained by said layout means on the background image; and

output means for outputting the image data, obtained by said generating means, to printing means.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said input means comprises:

means for displaying predetermined sample character strings on the display screen;

means for selecting a character string from the displayed sample character strings by using the touch panel;

means for setting the touch panel as character input means; and

means for displaying a virtual keyboard for character input operation when the touch panel is set as character input means.

20. (Original) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said input means comprises means for setting a character design.

21. (Previously presented) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the sticker has a form corresponding to a senjafuda, the form consisting of a header (kashira), a main body, and an insertion portion (sashifuda), and

wherein said input means inputs respective character strings for the header (kashira), main body, and insertion portion (sashifuda).

22. (Original) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said printing means prints plural stickers on one sheet.

23. (Previously presented) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising setting means for setting whether or not to insert the insertion portion (sashifuda) into the form,

wherein in a case that the setting means sets to insert the insertion portion (sashifuda) into the form, a part of the stickers in one sheet are printed with the insertion portion (sashifuda) inserted into the form.

24. (Original) The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising:

memory means for storing data inputted by said input means; and

designation means for designating to return to an input subject for changing already-inputted data,

wherein in a case where said designation means designates to return to an input subject, contents stored in said memory means are used as a default setting of the input subject.

25. (Currently amended) A control method of a sticker printing apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, comprising:

a selection step of selecting one of a plurality of background patterns displayed on the display screen by using said touch panel;

a background image display step of displaying on the display screen a background image corresponding to the pattern selected by said selection step;

an input step of inputting, by using said touch panel, a plurality of character strings to be printed on a sticker, each of said plurality of character strings being assigned to each of a plurality of logical layers which overlay each other in a fixed order ~~in association with a logical layer~~;

a control step of generating bit image data corresponding to an inputted character string and storing the bit image data in a predetermined storage, each time a character string is inputted in said input step;

a layout step of laying out each of the stored bit image data in accordance with said fixed order ~~for each layer~~;

a generating step of generating image data by overlaying each of the image data obtained by said layout step on the background image; and

an output step of outputting the image data, obtained in said generating step, to a printing unit.

26. (Currently amended) A storage medium storing program codes to serve as a sticker printing apparatus, which prints a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, said program codes having functions including:

selection means for selecting one of a plurality of background patterns displayed on the display screen by using said touch panel;

background image display means for displaying on the display screen a background image corresponding to the pattern selected by said selection means;

input means for inputting, by using said touch panel, a plurality of character strings to be printed on a sticker, each of said plurality of character strings being assigned to each

of a plurality of logical layers which overlay each other in a fixed order ~~in association with a logical layer~~;

control means for generating bit image data corresponding to an inputted character string and storing the bit image data in a predetermined storage, each time a character string is inputted by said input means;

layout means for laying out each of the stored bit image data for each layer;

generating means for generating image data by overlaying each of the image data obtained by said layout means on the background image; and

output means for outputting the image data, obtained by said generating means, to printing means.

27. (Currently amended) An apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, comprising:

start-up means for initiating start-up operation from a storage medium which stores an operating system (OS);

preliminary processor means for rewriting data, subjected to be written in secondary volatile storage means at least while the OS is operating, to predetermined data based on the storage medium, said secondary volatile storage means being accessible by a CPU in a first stage of each start-up and having a file system;

means for initiating the OS to operate in a second stage which is after rewriting operation is performed by said preliminary processor means;

selection means for selecting one of a plurality of background patterns displayed on the display screen by using said touch panel;

background image display means for displaying on the display screen a background image corresponding to the pattern selected by said selection means;

input means for inputting~~, in association with a logical layer,~~ a plurality of character strings to be printed on print paper under the operation of the OS, each of said plurality of character strings being assigned to each of a plurality of logical layers which overlay each other in a fixed order;

control means for generating bit image data corresponding to an inputted character string and storing the bit image data in a predetermined storage, each time a character string is inputted by said input means;

layout means for laying out each of the stored bit image data in accordance with said fixed order ~~for each layer~~;

generating means for generating an image data by overlaying each of the image data obtained by said layout means on the background image; and

output means for outputting image data, obtained by said generating means, to printing means.

28. (Currently amended) A sticker printing apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid ono a display screen, comprising:

start-up means for initiating start-up operation from a storage medium, storing an operating system (OS) and said application program in a directly executable form;

preliminary processor means for copying data from the storage medium, the data subjected to be written in a secondary volatile storage at least while the OS and the application program are operating, said secondary volatile storage means being accessible by a CPU in a first stage of start-up and having a file system;

means for initiating the OS to operate in a second stage which is after copying operation is performed by said preliminary processor means;

selection means for selecting one of a plurality of background patterns displayed on the display screen by using said touch panel;

background image display means for displaying on the display screen a background image corresponding to the pattern selected by said selection means;

input means for inputting~~, in association with a logical layer,~~ a plurality of character strings to be printed on a sticker under the operation of the OS, each of said plurality of character strings being assigned to each of a plurality of logical layers which overlay each other in a fixed order;

control means for generating bit image data corresponding to an inputted character string and storing the bit image data in a predetermined storage, each time a character string is inputted by said input means;

layout means for laying out each of the stored bit image data in accordance with said fixed order ~~for each layer~~;

generating means for generating an image data by overlaying each of the image data obtained by said layout means on the background image; and

output means for outputting image data, obtained by said generating means, to printing means.

29. to 31. (Canceled).

32. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 17, wherein each of the image data obtained by said layout means are arranged at predetermined fixed positions on the background image.

33. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein each of the image data obtained by said layout means are arranged at predetermined fixed positions on the background image.

34. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 27, wherein said storage medium storing the OS is a removable read only medium, and the apparatus has a drive for driving the removable read only medium and the secondary volatile storage means, and does not have a non-volatile writable storage,

wherein the predetermined storage is allocated in said secondary volatile storage means.

35. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein said storage medium storing the OS is a removable read only medium, and

the apparatus has a drive for driving the removable read only medium and the secondary volatile storage means, and does not have a non-volatile writable storage,

wherein the predetermined storage is allocated in said secondary volatile storage means.